



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

July 8, 2005

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Mickey's Letter Bag: Starting School After Labor Day?

I am writing to tell you of my support for starting the school year after Labor Day. I would further advocate a shortening of the summer holidays to six weeks, as it is in most of Europe. This would allow for more time off during the year (e.g. two weeks at Easter, instead of one), thereby reducing burn out and increasing students' retention of what they learned previously.

In our post-industrial society, children's labor on the farm is no longer necessary, and I feel that the long summer holiday period could easily be shortened to accommodate better and more learning time.

Sylvia Minchington
Sterling Heights

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Not being with children of school age in our house it don't much matter to us, however it does affect our grandchildren. Seems to me that right after school starts there is a day off for "in-service meetings". Better that school start after Labor Day allowing for families to finish the summer season. Tourism is important to many areas and in some cases vital to its fiscal success.

Jerome Schmidt
Sterling Heights

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Frankly, and personally, I think school should start after Labor Day. It just seems to me that Labor Day should be the last hurrah before the kids return to the long and tedious months of school busses, homework, bad weather, the cold of winter. And I feel they need that last time frame before school to

spend with the family, being together at home or away. As a senior, I remember shopping for school stuff, reading the last pages of the book I was reading and lamenting the fact that the vacation was over and we had to go back to school. Those last few days were like a reprieve.... let them have those days. My grandkids don't have full days, just half days and then the weekend and then school starts, so why not just start after Labor Day and avoid that hassle. I know the parents would prefer it to starting earlier, so that is my opinion.

Sincerely,
Grace Dodt
Clinton Township

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Dear Senator,

I wish to express my support for starting the school year after Labor Day. I think that leaving it up to individual districts ensures that they are all different. In many cases, this means that families wanting to enjoy the holidays with other relatives are inhibited by the ones that have start of school. In most cases very little actual educating is done that week. Also, often times, families will pull their children out of school for a planned vacation regardless of the start date. I think the state should encourage family unit activity and not make it harder to enjoy things as a family. In many cases Labor Day weekend is the only time Mom or Dad can get off of work to do something with the family.

Further, in the same vein I think that education should be managed by the State. In these times of budget cuts can we really afford to have so many local positions funded by the taxpayers. I think one Union contract for the state with one set of school days makes sense. I've observed school districts that have dropped enrollment in the double digit percentages as the community ages, but the drop in support staffs and size of the school boards have not dropped accordingly. When a private business is in trouble because of a drop in sales, the first thing they look at is reducing the overhead and consolidation of services but it seems public education looks first to reduce the product and increase the cost to the consumer and lastly at overhead. I don't call Teachers and Athletic directors overhead. I call school boards overhead and variation by district in some of these basic rules waste.

Tom Stockman
Sterling Heights

Hmm. It's unanimous...the e-mails that I received in response to the question posed from last issue says the same thing: It's better to start school after Labor Day. House Bill 4803 passed the Michigan House, 69-40, on June 30 and is heading to the Senate for consideration. I appreciate everyone's thoughts and would like to say I am leaning toward that direction as well.
Mickey

Mickey's Blog: Bidding Adieu to Brad Comment

July 1 was the last day for an important member of my staff, Legislative Director Brad Comment, who has taken a position with the Michigan Association of Counties (MAC), an organization that promotes issues and legislation for Michigan's 83 counties. He will sorely be missed in my office but I fully confident that he will be successful in his adventure. I would like to take an opportunity to share with you a tribute that I read on the Senate floor on June 30:

"This is a bittersweet day for me and my office today because my legislative director Brad Comment is serving his last day with me here and is moving on to bigger and better things. So I want to read a tribute to him:

Brad Comment was introduced to me as a Department of Education intern by Legislative Liaison Kate McAuliffe. She said Brad was about to graduate from Central Michigan University and had done a good job for the Department of Education. She thought he had a lot of promise and suggested I take a look at him.

I took a look. He was pretty green. But I also saw an earnest young man, who carried himself with a maturity beyond his age, and yet was also a good mixer. That summer, Brad volunteered for my campaign, and I got a chance to see his strong work ethic, getting up regularly for 5 a.m. literature drops, and his ability to manage and motivate people.

Brad started working for me when I entered the Senate in 2002. It was his first real job and he had a lot to learn, but he worked hard, kept his mouth shut, his nose clean, and his ears open. It wasn't long before he mastered the issues, made hundreds of contacts, and became something of an operator on the Senate floor and in the lobby. Besides all this, he entered graduate school and is working on a Master's degree in Public Administration. After two years, he was handling administrative matters flawlessly, recruiting, coordinating and supervising an impressive array of interns, making presentations to associations to support legislation to replace the School MEAP test, and explaining to the press my position on legislation issues. Best of all, he demonstrated uncommon Bi-Partisan skill by convincing a Republican Staffer, Amanda Beekman, to marry him this Fall.

So just when Brad had reached the height of his legislative powers, the true powers in Lansing plucked him from my office with a lucrative position with the Michigan Association of Counties. His days of toiling for peanuts, with a miserable ogre for a boss, have mercifully ended. His hard work has paid off. Brad is an example to interns everywhere. Seize your opportunities, make the most of them, make yourself valuable, and you will be rewarded.

This is as it should be. My office will miss Brad, but we are proud of his accomplishments and thankful for the work he has done. We now have another good friend, and enterprising young lawyer, Marie Gordon, who is a little green, but works hard and has a great example to emulate."

So, Brad, I want to thank you for your work, and I hope the Senate appreciates him as much as I have."
(-as quoted in the Senate Journal on June 30, 2005)

What Do You Think? Is Your City "Cool"?

Last month, Governor Granholm announced that Utica was a cool city and provided a \$15,000 matching grant that would go toward working on a plan to promote and develop their downtown area.

The thought behind the Cool City Initiative is to help revitalize Michigan's cities and towns by creating a vibrant and energetic place that would help attract jobs, people and opportunity to our state.

Is your city or township cool? What is cool? What would make your city or township cooler? Here's your chance to show your creativity on municipal coolness. Write back to me your thoughts and I will publish some of your e-mails in the next issue of the *Insider E-Newsletter*.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Various Times
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

Aug. 1
7-9 p.m.

Location: Sterling Heights Public Library
(40255 Dodge Park)
Sterling Heights

September 26
7-9 p.m.

Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library
(40900 Romeo Plank, south of Canal Road)
Clinton Township

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